#### **Document 1: The Spoils System**

Jackson entered the White House with an uncertain policy agenda beyond a vague craving for "reform" (or revenge) and a determination to settle relationships between the states and the Indian tribes within their borders. On these two matters he moved quickly and decisively.

During the campaign, Jackson had charged the Adams bureaucracy with fraud and with working against his election. As President, he initiated sweeping removals among high ranking government officials—Washington bureau chiefs, land and customs officers, and federal marshals and attorneys. Jackson claimed to be purging the corruption, laxity, and arrogance that came with long tenure, and restoring the opportunity for government service to the citizenry at large through "rotation in office." But haste and gullibility did much to confuse his purpose. Under the guise of reform, many offices were doled out as rewards for political services. Newspaper editors who had championed Jackson's cause, some of them very unsavory characters, came in for special favor. His most appalling appointee was an old army comrade and political sycophant named Samuel Swartwout. Against all advice, Jackson made him collector of the New York City customhouse, where the government collected nearly half its annual revenue. In 1838, Swartwout absconded with more than $1 million, a staggering sum for that day.

Jackson denied that political criteria motivated his appointments, claiming honesty and efficiency as his only goals. Yet he accepted an officeholder's support for Adams as evidence of unfitness, and in choosing replacements he relied exclusively on recommendations from his own partisans. A Jackson senator from New York, William L. Marcy, defended Jackson's removals by proclaiming frankly in 1832 that in politics as in war, "to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy." Jackson was never so candid—or so cynical. Creating the "spoils system" of partisan manipulation of the patronage was not his conscious intention. Still, it was his doing.

*Source:* [*http://millercenter.org/president/jackson/essays/biography/4*](http://millercenter.org/president/jackson/essays/biography/4)

**Document 2: Indian Removal**

Indian nations had been largely erased or removed from the northeastern United States by the time Jackson became President. But in the southwest, the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks still occupied large portions of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. For many years, Jackson had protested the practice of treating with Indian tribes as if they were foreign nations. Jackson did not hate Indians as a race. He was friendly with many individual Indians and had taken home an Indian orphan from the Creek campaign to raise in his household as a companion to his adopted son. But Jackson did believe that Indian civilization was lower than that of whites, and that for their own survival, tribes who were pressed by white settlement must assimilate as individuals or remove to the west out of harm's way. Confident that he could judge the Indians' true welfare better than they, Jackson, when employed as an Indian negotiator in his army years, had often used threats and bribery to procure cessions of land. Formalities notwithstanding, he regarded tribes resident within the states not as independent sovereign entities but as wards of the government and tenants-at-will.

The inherent conflict between tribal and state authority came to a head just as Jackson assumed office. The Cherokee nation had acquired many of the attributes of white civilization, including a written language, a newspaper, and a constitution of government. Under its treaties with the federal government, the tribe claimed sovereign authority over its territory in Georgia and adjoining states. Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi countered by asserting state jurisdiction over their Indian domains.

Jackson backed the states. He maintained that the federal government had no right to defend the Cherokees against Georgia's encroachments. If the Indians wished to maintain their tribal government and landownership, they must remove beyond the existing states. To facilitate the removal, Jackson induced Congress in 1830 to pass a bill empowering him to lay off new Indian homelands west of the Mississippi, exchange them for current tribal holdings, purchase the Indians' capital improvements, and pay the costs of their westward transportation. This Indian Removal Act was the only major piece of legislation passed at Jackson's behest in his eight years as President.

Indian removal was so important to Jackson that he returned to Tennessee to conduct the first negotiations in person. He gave the Indians a simple alternative: submit to state authority or emigrate beyond the Mississippi. Offered generous aid on one hand and the threat of subjugation on the other, the Chickasaws and Choctaws submitted readily, the Creeks under duress. Only the Cherokees resisted to the bitter end. Tentatively in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia in 1831 and more forcefully in Worcester v. Georgia the next year, the Supreme Court upheld the tribes' independence from state authority. But these legal victories pointed out no practical course of resistance for the tribe to take. Tacitly encouraged by Jackson, Georgia ignored the rulings. Jackson cultivated a minority faction within the tribe, and signed a removal treaty with them in 1835. Though the vast majority of Cherokees rejected the treaty, those who refused to remove under its terms were finally rounded up and transplanted westward by military force in 1838, under Jackson's successor Martin Van Buren. The Cherokees' sufferings in this forced exodus became notorious as the "Trail of Tears."

Meanwhile, dozens of removal treaties closed out pockets of Indian settlement in other states and territories east of the Mississippi. A short military campaign on the upper Mississippi quelled resistance by Black Hawk's band of Sacs and Foxes in 1832, and in 1835 a long and bloody war to subdue the Seminoles in Florida began. Most of the tribes went without force.

Given the coercion that produced them, most of the removal treaties were fair and even generous. Their execution was miserable. Generally the treaties promised fair payment for the Indians' land and goods, safe transportation to the West and sustenance upon arrival, and protection for the property of those who chose to remain behind under state jurisdiction. These safeguards collapsed under pressure from corrupt contractors, unscrupulous traders, and white trespassers backed by state authority. Jackson's desire to economize and avoid trouble with the state governments further undercut federal efforts to protect the tribes. For this record he bore ultimate responsibility. Jackson did not countenance the abuses, but he did ignore them. Though usually a stickler for the precise letter of formal obligations, he made promises to the Indians that the government did not and perhaps could not fulfill.

*Source: http://millercenter.org/president/jackson/essays/biography/4*

#### **Document 3: The Bank Veto**

The congressional Clay-Calhoun alliance foreshadowed a convergence of all Jackson's enemies into a new opposition party. The issue that sealed this coalition, solidified Jackson's own following, and dominated his second term as President was the Second Bank of the United States.

The Bank of the United States was a quasi-public corporation chartered by Congress to manage the federal government's finances and provide a sound national currency. Headquartered in Philadelphia with branches throughout the states, it was the country's only truly national financial institution. The federal government owned one-fifth of the stock and the President of the United States appointed one-fifth of the directors. Like other banks chartered by state legislatures, the Bank lent for profit and issued paper currency backed by specie reserves. Its notes were federal legal tender. By law, it was also the federal government's own banker, arranging its loans and storing, transferring, and disbursing its funds. The Bank's national reach and official status gave it enormous leverage over the state banks and over the country's supply of money and credit.

The original Bank of the United States was chartered in 1791 at the urging of Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton. Opposition to it was one of the founding tenets of the Jeffersonian Democratic-Republican party. That party allowed the Bank to expire when its twenty-year charter ran out in 1811. But the government's financial misadventures in the War of 1812 forced a reconsideration. In 1816, Congress chartered the Second Bank, again for twenty years.

Imprudent lending and corrupt management brought the Second Bank into deep disrepute during the speculative boom-and-bust cycle that culminated in the Panic of 1819. Calls arose for revocation of the charter. But the astute stewardship of new Bank president Nicholas Biddle did much to repair its reputation in the 1820s. By 1828, when Jackson was first elected, the Bank had ceased to be controversial. Indeed, most informed observers deemed it indispensable.

Startling his own supporters, Jackson attacked the Bank in his very first message to Congress in 1829. Biddle attempted to conciliate him, but Jackson's opposition to renewing the charter seemed immovable. He was convinced that the Bank was not only unconstitutional—as Jefferson and his followers had long maintained—but that its concentrated financial power represented a dire threat to popular liberty.

Under the advice of Senators Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, Biddle sought a congressional recharter in 1832. They calculated that Jackson would not dare issue a veto on the eve of the election; if he did, they would make an issue of it in the campaign. The recharter bill duly passed Congress and on July 10, Jackson vetoed it.

The veto message was one of the defining documents of Jackson's presidency. Clearly intended for the public eye, parts of it read more like a political manifesto than a communication to Congress. Jackson recited his constitutional objections and introduced some dubious economic arguments, chiefly aimed at foreign ownership of Bank stock. But the crux of the message was its attack on the special privilege enjoyed by private stockholders in a government-chartered corporation. Jackson laid out an essentially laissez-faire vision of government as a neutral arbiter, phrased in a resonant populism:

"It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers--who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing."

Though some original Jackson men were flabbergasted and outraged at his turn against the Bank, the veto held up in Congress. It became the prime issue in the ensuing presidential campaign, with both sides distributing copies of Jackson's message. Jackson read his re-election as a mandate to pursue his attack on the Bank further.

*Source: http://millercenter.org/president/jackson/essays/biography/4*

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### Document 4: Nullification Crisis

Ratification of the U.S. Constitution (1787) left unresolved the issue of whether the federal or state governments were sovereign. Some assumed that the federal government was a subordinate creation of the states, which reserved the power to render null and void any federal law. In 1832, to resist the enactment of a protective tariff and to affirm states' rights, Vice President John C. Calhoun resigned his position and returned to South Carolina, which nullified the tariff. After the federal government threatened to use force, Henry Clay worked out a compromise that allowed the sectional crisis to cool.

Imposing tariffs was a federal power based on the constitutional power to raise revenue. The U.S. Congress began using it in 1824 to protect the newly emerging industries of the northeast. (Protective tariffs were also a component of Clay's "American System," which aimed to tie disparate U.S. regions together through internal improvements.) In 1828, Congress passed a highly protective tariff, which its opponents dubbed the Tariff of Abominations.

As agricultural exporters and importers of finished products, Southerners objected to the fact that the protective tariff raised the costs of their purchases and reduced their volume of exports. Southerners also understood that a federal government that could impose an unacceptable law had the potential to impose the most unacceptable of all, an outlawing of slavery. Southerners like South Carolina senator Robert Y. Hayne and Calhoun promptly raised questions about the tariff's constitutionality and claimed the right of a state to nullify an unacceptable federal law. They cited James Madison's Virginia Resolution and Thomas Jefferson's Kentucky Resolution, written during the debates over the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798.

In January 1830, a series of debates between Hayne and Daniel Webster defined the terms of the argument over the nature of the federal union that would persist for the next 30 years. In 1832, Andrew Jackson won the presidency with Calhoun as his vice president. At a Jefferson Day celebration, Jackson toasted, "Our Federal Unionóit must be preserved." Calhoun responded, "The Unionónext to our liberty most dear."

When Jackson signed the modified Tariff Act of 1832, Calhoun resigned in protest and went to South Carolina to interpose the state against federal enforcement of the tariff. Congress passed the Force Act, and Jackson threatened to send troops to enforce the tariff. Clay averted a collision by enacting a compromise that produced a degree of tariff reduction in 1833. Sectional tension, however, remained and would eventually culminate in the Civil War, the victory of the Jackson-Webster definition of the Union, and the domination of the industrial region over the agricultural sector.

Source: Barnhill, John H. "nullification crisis." In *American History*. ABC-CLIO, 2000-. Accessed September 17, 2014. http://americanhistory.abc-clio.com/.